

# STELLA WRIGHT HOMES HOPE VI

"TRANSFORMING TODAY'S VISION INTO TOMORROW'S REALITY"

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The Executive Director, Harold Lucas, and the HOPE VI and FSS staffs congratulate those former Stella Wright Homes residents who are beginning a new chapter in their lives and the lives of their families with their new residency at West Kinney Gardens. Some of them lived at Stella for a few years and others raised entire families there. Each one carries a vision of an exciting new residence with new neighbors from all income, social, economic and political backgrounds. Joining in efforts to forge a 'community' from this mix is now their challenge. Their success will benefit all of the families at West Kinney Gardens and the entire Newark community. See adjacent story and stories on page 3 about a few of these residents.

## WEST KINNEY GARDENS REHOUSING:

# NEW APARTMENT JOY



Ms. Stephanie Brandon (2nd left) and her family welcome guests on their first day in their new apartment.

Stephanie Brandon and her children were all smiles as they became one of the first new residents at West Kinney Gardens in August. Ms. Brandon left Stella in 1999 and moved to a Section 8 apartment in Irvington where she and her family lived waiting for an opportunity to be one of the residents who qualified for the new townhouses.

"I've been so excited and so prayerful, through this whole process," she said. While there were a few challenges along the way—paperwork and more paperwork, interviews and the anxiety around the moving date, Ms. Brandon and her family began settling in immediately and looking forward to the children decorating their bedrooms.

The living space is split between two floors with the bedrooms on the second floor so Ms. Brandon expects they will all get plenty of exercise. "We don't mind the stairs," she said. "It would probably be different if my children were younger."

As with any move, arranging and rearranging furniture, placing the dishes in the cabinets, hanging artwork and generally making it feel like 'home' can take some time. "I'm impatient to get everything in its place," Ms. Brandon told visitors shortly after she moved in. "I don't expect it to take me but a few days

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Shown left above is a pocket park at West Kinney Gardens in the foreground with occupied rental units in the background. Above right: The 21-unit senior/disabled building that also will house the community center and management offices. Far left is a row of occupied rental units at West Kinney and Sayre Street.

FROM THE DESK OF  
THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"These new units [at West Kinney Gardens] allow the Newark Housing Authority to continue to keep its commitment to the low and moderate income families in our communities who are seeking quality housing. Additionally, they represent a significant contribution to the economic growth that is fast becoming the hallmark of the City of Newark and the Central Ward."

**Harold Lucas**  
Executive Director

The success of the new rental housing and for sale homes that are nearly complete on the West Kinney Gardens site (formerly Hayes Homes) represents one of the best examples of the tremendous results that can take place when governments, organizations and people of good will work together. From the inception of the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI Revitalization Project, Newark Mayor Sharpe James and his administration, the Newark City Council, the local public schools' management, the area universities and numerous community organizations recognized the potential in the vision of a mixed-income

community in the Central Ward that would be able to gain strength from the many valuable assets the community already possessed and to increase the viability of the community by the addition of quality housing.

The new resident mix includes former Stella Wright Homes residents, public housing and Section 8 residents and low and moderate income individuals from the greater Essex County area as well as market rate renters and homeowners. As of late November, nearly 100 of the rental units were occupied and nearly a dozen homes had new owners.

A casual drive through the neighborhood quickly tells you that something new and different is happening in the area. The developer, Roizman Development Inc., has created a community that boasts designs that complement the community, green

spaces and playgrounds—all envisioned when former residents, community leaders and elected officials met to set a vision for the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI project.

Soon the momentum will shift from West Kinney Gardens to the new construction on the former site of the Stella Wright Homes apartments. At the same time, the third phase of the HOPE VI construction will begin on the site of the former Hill Manor apartments. These new units allow the Newark Housing Authority to continue to keep its commitment to the low and moderate income families in our communities who are seeking quality housing. Additionally, they represent a significant contribution to the economic growth that is fast becoming the hallmark of the City of Newark and the Central Ward.

*Harold Lucas*

## West Kinney Gardens Rehousing

## LESA THOMAS LOVES NEW RESIDENCE

As Lesa Thomas showed visitors around her new three-bedroom apartment at West Kinney Gardens, she beamed with delight. The mother of two (a nine-year old daughter and a fifteen-year old son), said the apartment "is even more than I expected. It is really nice."

Ms. Thomas had lived at Stella Wright Homes for two and one-half years before applying for and receiving a Section 8 voucher as part of the relocation process in 2001. She and her family relocated to the Vailsburg section of Newark while they awaited

the opportunity to apply for a new apartment at the West Kinney site.

"The most difficult part of the move has been to try to get everything situated in the right place," Thomas said. As her daughter looked on, she showed visitors her master bedroom complete with her own bathroom. "I love it," she added.

Ms. Thomas said she has lived in Newark all of her life and she appreciates the changes taking place as a result of projects like the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI project. Her

children will need to change schools because of the move to West Kinney, but nobody is complaining about that, she said.



Ms. Thomas proudly shows visitors her master bedroom complete with bath.

## WEST KINNEY GARDENS REHOUSING

## NEW APARTMENT JOY

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and it will be as if we've lived here for months."

Contacted three months after moving in, Ms. Brandon said things are slowly falling into place as more residents move in. The management company has hired new security effective in November and residents are eagerly awaiting the completion of the playground for children. "When you've got small children, there's only so long you can keep them still," she said. "We really need the playground space for them to have a safe place on the property to play."



Boxes were everywhere on the first day of move-in, but Ms. Brandon and her family were happily unpacking and looking forward to getting everything in place.

## Home Sweet New Home

## Homeownership: A Dream Come True for Renee Daniels &amp; Family

Renee Daniels is the first to confirm that buying her first home was one of the most challenging times of her life. She will just as quickly tell you that now that all the waiting, all the back and forth and all the paperwork are behind her the experience is "nothing but positive." The mother of two was among the first new residents of the 17th Avenue for sale homes on the West Kinney Gardens site. She and her two children and niece are enjoying every minute in their four-bedroom townhouse.

"I cried everyday," Ms. Daniels says about the process. "It was a tedious process and a learning process, but it was worth it." Although she had taken the first time home ownership course earlier this year, Ms. Daniels said she was still not prepared for all of the challenges she faced with

reviewing documents, asking questions, answering questions, providing more and more information. It was a process that (Continued on page 4)



Renee Daniels is shown here busily cleaning up after dinner in her new home at West Kinney Gardens. Ms. Daniels said it took a lot of blood, sweat and tears but "it was worth it."

# COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A MUST

PREPARED BY BRIAN RAWLS, COMMUNITY SERVICE COORDINATOR

Under rules by the federal government, all residents of public housing, between the ages of 18-62 years old, must contribute eight hours of community service each month or participate in an economic self sufficiency program unless he or she is exempt. The goal of this mandate is to give public housing residents opportunities to improve their economic and social well being through "giving back" to their communities. (This requirement does not apply to Section 8 tenants.)

The public housing residents exempt from this requirement are those:

- Working at least 30 hours per week and earning at least \$8,034/per year.

- Aged 62 years and older.
- Blind or disabled or primary caretakers of individuals who are blind or disabled.
- Volunteering 8 hours a month for an agency/organization.
- Participating in a job skills training program.
- Enrolled in high school or a GED study course.
- Providing childcare assistance to an individual participating in the community service program.
- Participating in a program



directly related to getting employment.

- In compliance with TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) or GA (General Assistance).

## Home Sweet New Home

### Homeownership: A Dream Come True for Renee Daniels & Family

(Continued from page 3)

never seemed to end and with each telephone call her anxiety increased. But she persevered. "I needed to get my children to a different neighborhood where we could feel safer." Apparently it's working because her son is enjoying the back yard, and even her daughter, whom she describes as more timid, has said that she feels safer in the new neighborhood.

Ms. Daniels, a secretary in Section 8, said she now is eager to share the information she learned with others who are working with Section 8 case managers to fulfill their dream of owning a home. "I tell them I've been there because I am a single parent and I lived in low income housing. It's not a quick effort, but it is possible.

"They need to know that credit is very important. And they should not hesitate to ask questions of the loan officer, the seller or whomever until they understand the answer. It's also important to shop around to see what assistance different lending institutions offer.

"Most importantly," she added, "you have to remember that owning your own home is about your children's future. It is a place they can call home until they are ready to leave and something you can leave them as a legacy."

Ms. Daniels said her home is sparsely furnished now because she's concentrating on making sure her finances are secure. "I'm willing to go without a few things now but my family and I are enjoying every moment in our new home."

It is a must that every resident in the household ages 18-62 comply with this mandate. An entire family may be in jeopardy of "non-renewal" of the lease if even one non-exempt person fails to comply with the mandate.

Once each family member completes the community service survey and files for any required exemption, he/she is responsible for reporting any changes in status to both the site manager and the community service coordinator.

The Family Self-Sufficiency Department is diligently seeking agencies throughout the city to engage each participant in a meaningful volunteer experience. However, the responsibility to fulfill this requirement is the sole responsibility of residents. If you have questions about the requirements or have not completed the appropriate documentation relative to your exemption status, please call Brian Rawls at 973-273-6685 immediately.

## STELLA UPDATE

## STELLA GARDENS WILL BE THE FIRST NEW HOUSING ON FORMER SITE

While the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI Revitalization Plan includes construction of new housing on three different sites in the Central Ward, the site that continues to draw the most curiosity and the pervading questions is where the mammoth seven-building, 1,179 unit Stella Wright Homes project once stood off Irvine Turner Boulevard.



The former Stella Wright Homes site, dormant since the demolition of all the buildings in 2002, has begun its transformation into Stella Gardens. The developer, Roizman Development, Inc., began construction on ninety-three (93) rental townhouse units in September. The units will be constructed on the site bordered by Prince Street on the west, Barclay Street on the east, Spruce Street on the south and Montgomery Street on the North.

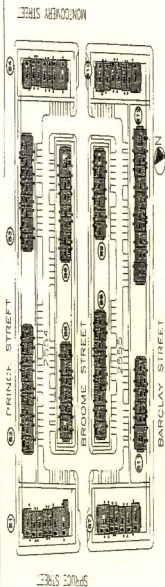
The construction style and quality are expected to be equivalent to the development that is in the rent-up stages at West Kinney Gardens.

Former Stella Wright Homes residents who are lease compliant and meet all of the site specific requirements (credit, rental history payment, criminal background check and housekeeping) will receive first preference for a portion of the units under construction. The process for resident selection and rehousing will be the same as for West Kinney Gardens.

The next phase of construction on the former Stella site will be Charlton Gardens consisting of sixty (60) rental units. The financing and construction plans for this phase are in the initial stages of development. Construction is expected to commence in the fall of 2005.

The final phase of 25 (twenty-five) for sale homes will begin about the same time as the Charlton Gardens construction.

All construction on the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI project is scheduled for completion by December 31, 2006.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: REHOUSING AT WEST KINNEY



**Q: Is West Kinney Gardens owned by the Newark Housing Authority?**

A: No. West Kinney Gardens is one of the sites being developed as part of the Stella Wright Homes HOPE VI Revitalization Project. The NHA's Board of Commissioner's designated the Roizman Development Co., Inc. as the developer of the site. Roizman's management company for the site is SHNIR Management Company, Inc.

**Q: Will I lose my Section 8 Voucher if I move into West Kinney?**

A: Not necessarily. You may use your Section 8 voucher at West Kinney as you would any other housing development. NHA will enter into a HAP contract with Roizman as with any other landlord. However, if you move into an apartment that is not identified as a Section 8 unit (an ACC unit), you will lose your Section 8 voucher. If losing your voucher is an issue, SHNIR staff should explain this to you before and give you an option to decline.

**Q: I have an ACC unit at West Kinney. What happens if I am evicted from West Kinney?**

A: NHA has a small ownership interest in West Kinney Gardens; however, the majority owner, Roizman Development Inc., and its management firm, SHNIR, are responsible for maintaining and managing the project. The NHA will not intercede on

your behalf once you have been housed at West Kinney Gardens.

**Q: Is there a rent cap on the ACC Units at West Kinney Gardens?**

A: The rent cap on the ACC units remains the same 30% of income as in a public housing unit.

**Q: Will there be a community room at West Kinney?**

A: Yes. The community room will be located in the four-story elevator building being built at the corner of Springfield and Hunterdon. The management company will detail the specifics regarding usage, hours, activities, etc. once the facility is ready for use.

**Q: Will there be a resident Community Group?**

A: Once the community is fully rented up, the management company will give residents an opportunity to decide on participation in a resident community group.

**Q: When will I get orientation?**

A: You should have received orientation around your apartment and the complex at move-in, along with a written packet of information to answer questions about who to call when there is a problem with the unit (repair issues), how to use the appliances, and where the mailboxes, playground, etc. are located. If this did not happen, you should contact the SHNIR staff at 973-621-0315 and ask them to provide

you with this information.

**Q: Can you tell what kind of unit I am in from the outside?**

A: No. West Kinney Gardens is a mixed-income community (low, medium and market rate housing side by side). One of the intents of the design of West Kinney Gardens was to insure consistency in the quality and appearance of the housing throughout the site. On close inspection you will see that this has been accomplished.

**Q: How do I know if I am entitled to moving expenses?**

A: You can contact your Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) case manager once SHNIR informs you that you have been selected to move into a unit. If you do not have an assigned case manager, call Mariselis Bonilla at 973-273-6689. She will make an appointment with you to discuss the entire moving process, including your eligibility for moving expenses.

**Q: If I was rejected for housing at West Kinney Gardens does that mean I am not eligible for housing at the former Stella Wright Homes site when that construction is completed?**

A: Not necessarily. A lot depends on why you were rejected. You must contact your FSS case manager immediately to review your rejection notice and to develop a self-sufficiency plan to correct the areas of concerns. (See article on back page for criteria for rehousing.)

# HELPING YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

It's not just talk—being prepared is important



whether it's work or school. As parents, you can help your child establish routines that will improve his or her school performance. The keys are planning and follow-through on a regular basis. Here are some tips:

1. Work with your child to develop a habit of writing down all homework assignments every day. Children often think that they will remember, but they already are busy remembering friends' phone numbers, the latest gossip and other stuff important to them. They can use a sheet of notebook paper, a day planner or a PDA, but all tests, quizzes and other assignments need to be written every day for each class.

2. Encourage them to review the assignment list at the end of each day **before** they leave school. That way they will know which books and other materials they need to bring home.

3. Set an established pattern for when homework is to be completed. Each child is different—yours may need a break after school with time to watch TV or play outside before beginning. For other children it is absolutely necessary to have a snack and get right to the homework. Whatever you and your child establish as a homework schedule, it should be followed daily.

4. Take a few minutes to discuss the completed homework with your child. Ask questions to see if he/she understands the subject. Review the homework whenever possible. If you decide your child needs assistance in a subject, make an appointment with the teacher to discuss what help is available at the school or in the community. Many community groups, churches and



other organizations provide educational enrichment programs for the community often at little or no cost.

5. Once homework assignments are finished, encourage your child to pack his/her book bag immediately to avoid all the confusion in the morning.

6. If assignments are not due the next day, establish a plan for completing the assignment at least a day before it is due so that you both have time to review it.

7. To motivate your child to take responsibility for doing homework assignments well and in a timely manner, establish a system of checks and balances—rewards when they complete the assignments (money or clothing allowance, trip to the movie or arcade, an electronic game they desire, more time outside with friends). Likewise, failure to follow the routine should result in the denial of something they really want.



It is important for all children to understand that giving school their best effort is important to them and to their family. Your role as a parent is to help them establish good, consistent habits, to stay involved and to use rewards and other motivators that are important and interesting to your children.

For more helpful information to help your child succeed, visit your local library and ask your reference librarian for or visit these websites

- [www.nps.k12.nj.us](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us)—under learning and teaching section has 'Snapshot of objectives and outcomes' for k-8 grades
- [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)—current information and guides on issues of interest to parents and guardians
- [www.aboutschool.com](http://www.aboutschool.com)—resource guide for parents and educators



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***FINAL WORD:***

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR REHOUSING  
AT HOPE VI SITES**

While the rehousing at West Kinney Gardens (the former Hayes Homes site) is well underway, the Stella Wright Homes Revitalization Plan also includes a current projection of over 150 rental units and 25 for sale homes on the site of Stella Wright Homes. Former Stella Wright Homes residents will continue to be eligible for rehousing at this development provided they are lease compliant and meet the site specific requirements.

For those of you who are interested in moving into new townhouses on the Stella site, you need to contact your FSS case manager now to review your status (rent history, credit report, house keeping, etc) and to develop an Individual Service Plan to improve any conditions that might hinder your

application.

**NOW IS THE TIME** to begin this process. By the time you see the units under construction at Stella Gardens next summer, it will be too late to correct your rent history record or to straighten out any issues with your credit.

FSS regularly has workshops on topics that will make you ready for the new townhouses. And anyone interested in homeownership should begin working with FSS immediately to prepare.

**DON'T HESITATE. MAKE THAT CALL TODAY. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CASE MANAGER, CALL 973-273-6695 FOR AN ASSIGNMENT.**